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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

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9 AUG 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR : Under Secretary of the Air Force

SUBJECT : NRO Satellite Operations Office

REFERENCE : Memorandum for Deputy Director (Research), CIA, from
Under Secretary of the Air Force, dated 15 June 1962,
Subject as above [redacted]-62)

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1. I am in complete agreement with your concept as expressed in your 15 June memorandum for holding final control of satellite mission planning and the matching of intelligence collection requirements and satellite collection capabilities in Washington. Because of the high national importance, the sensitivity of these activities, and the need for rapid and precise response to the interests of the highest governmental levels, I believe such control can be usefully centralized in a single location in the Pentagon although information centers might be desirable in Langley as well. I also concur with your views that the present CORONA type setup is desirable and that we should avoid the duplication of the existing computerized setup [redacted] with similar facilities in Washington. With the more advanced systems permitting specific on-orbit target selection, this may, however, necessitate greater control on the West Coast.

2. In order to preserve and insure the continued cooperation and coordination between DOD and CIA in these matters, and to best utilize our available assets, it is definitely in order, as you suggest, to staff the satellite operations center with career personnel from both the Air Force and CIA, and, for some programs, Army or Navy personnel may be desirable and necessary.

3. I have but two observations with regard to implementation of the satellite operations center:

a. So far as I am aware the operational control function of the programs directed by General Greer and of the CORONA-MURAL program is being performed well. Therefore, I would question the need for great urgency in any transference, physical or organizational, in the present arrangements for these programs. I should prefer to make such changes at more leisure with attendant greater confidence that no procedural

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misap would occur during such change. This does not mean, however, that joint planning must not be undertaken expeditiously to prepare for operational control of programs scheduled for initial operation in forthcoming months.

b. Second, although you suggest the CORONA-MURAL operational planning team as a nucleus, I would welcome augmentation from personnel of General Greer's staff who are concerned with such problems, particularly those individuals responsible for payload operational planning. While a good deal of experience has been gained from CORONA program operations, I would be greatly surprised if significant contributions could not be obtained from programs under General Greer's direction despite their relative operational youth. In addition, the very small staff now carrying out this function is urgently needed to handle the workload of the present heavy summer CORONA schedule. When the planning, facilities, and training are completed the necessary personnel could be transferred to the permanent NRO center.

4. We have found that a senior officer and deputy combination is essential to maintain the necessary 24-hour control of operations during satellite missions. Therefore, I would suggest that beginning at once an Air Force senior operations officer be designated to participate initially as an observer, but quite soon as a participant in the real time operational decisions needed for the CORONA-MURAL missions. This logically could precede and prepare for a senior Air Force officer and a senior CIA career official serving as alternates in operational decision-making for satellite reconnaissance missions within the NRO operations center.

5. In conclusion, it must be understood and agreed that operational control of satellite reconnaissance by this means should be confined to satellite programs and not expanded in the future to include certain other activities.

I believe that the operational control center for such aircraft programs as TACKLE, etc., should be maintained in the Langley headquarters.

Signed Herbert Scoville, Jr.

HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.
Deputy Director
(Research)

Signature Recommended:

JAMES A. CUMMINGHAM, JR.
Deputy Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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